

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An information playback apparatus comprising:

a first acquisition unit configured to acquire contents from an information storage medium;

a second acquisition unit configured to acquire expansion information from at least one of the information storage medium and an external apparatus via a communication line;

a storage unit configured to store the expansion information acquired by the second acquisition unit in accordance with a type of the expansion information; ~~and~~

a control unit configured to control input of the expansion information to the storage unit and output of the expansion information from the storage unit; and

a playback unit configured to play back the contents acquired by the first acquisition unit, and to play back the expansion information stored in the storage unit in synchronism with playback of the contents,

wherein each of segmented memory spaces of the storage unit stores ~~and outputs~~ a plurality of pieces of segmented expansion information which form a first type of expansion information on the basis of input control by the control unit when the first type of expansion information is to be stored, the first type of expansion information stored in the storage unit being output on the basis of output control by the control unit, and

the segmented memory spaces of the storage unit are integrated to store ~~and output~~ a second type of expansion information on the basis of input control by the control unit when the second type of expansion information is to be stored, the second type of expansion information stored in the storage unit being output on the basis of output control by the control unit,

the contents contain predetermined playback information assigned with time information,

the expansion information contains at least one segmented expansion information,  
one segmented expansion information contains header information and main body expansion information,

the header information contains time information, and

the playback unit plays back predetermined main body expansion information on the basis of the time information contained in the header information of the segmented expansion information in synchronism with playback of predetermined playback information contained in the contents.

2-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) An information playback method comprising:

acquiring expansion information from at least one of an information storage medium and an external apparatus via a communication line;

storing, in a storage unit, the expansion information in accordance with a type of information; and

playing back the contents acquired from the information storage medium, and playing back the expansion information stored in the storage unit in synchronism with playback of the contents,

wherein each of segmented memory spaces of the storage unit stores ~~and outputs~~ a plurality of pieces of segmented expansion information which form a first type of expansion information when the first type of expansion information is to be stored, ~~and~~

the segmented memory spaces of the storage unit are integrated to store ~~and output~~ a second type of expansion information when the second type of expansion information is to be stored,

the contents contain predetermined playback information assigned with time information,

the expansion information contains at least one segmented expansion information,  
one segmented expansion information contains header information and main body expansion information,

the header information contains time information, and  
playing back includes playing back predetermined main body expansion information on the basis of the time information contained in the header information of the segmented expansion information in synchronism with playback of predetermined playback information contained in the contents.

8-13. (Cancelled)

14. (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first and second types of expansion information need not always be output at the same time.

15. (New) A method according to claim 7, wherein the first and second types of expansion information need not always be output at the same time.

16. (New) An information playback apparatus comprising:  
a first acquisition unit configured to acquire contents from an information storage medium;

a second acquisition unit configured to acquire expansion information from at least one of the information storage medium and an external apparatus via a communication line;

a storage unit configured to store the expansion information acquired by the second acquisition unit in accordance with a type of the expansion information; and

a playback unit configured to play back the contents acquired by the first acquisition unit, and to play back the expansion information stored in the storage unit in synchronism with playback of the contents,

wherein the storage unit is a ring buffer, a start address and an end address of a storage area of the ring buffer are adjacent to each other, and when data are recorded in sequence in the ring buffer, oldest data in the ring buffer is overwritten by new data.

17. (New) An information playback method comprising:

acquiring expansion information from at least one of an information storage medium and an external apparatus via a communication line;

storing, in a storage unit, the expansion information in accordance with a type of information; and

playing back the contents acquired from the information storage medium, and playing back the expansion information stored in the storage unit in synchronism with playback of the contents,

wherein the storage unit is a ring buffer, a start address and an end address of a storage area of the ring buffer are adjacent to each other, and when data are recorded in sequence in the ring buffer, oldest data in the ring buffer is overwritten by new data.